



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Petersburg National Battlefield
Virginia

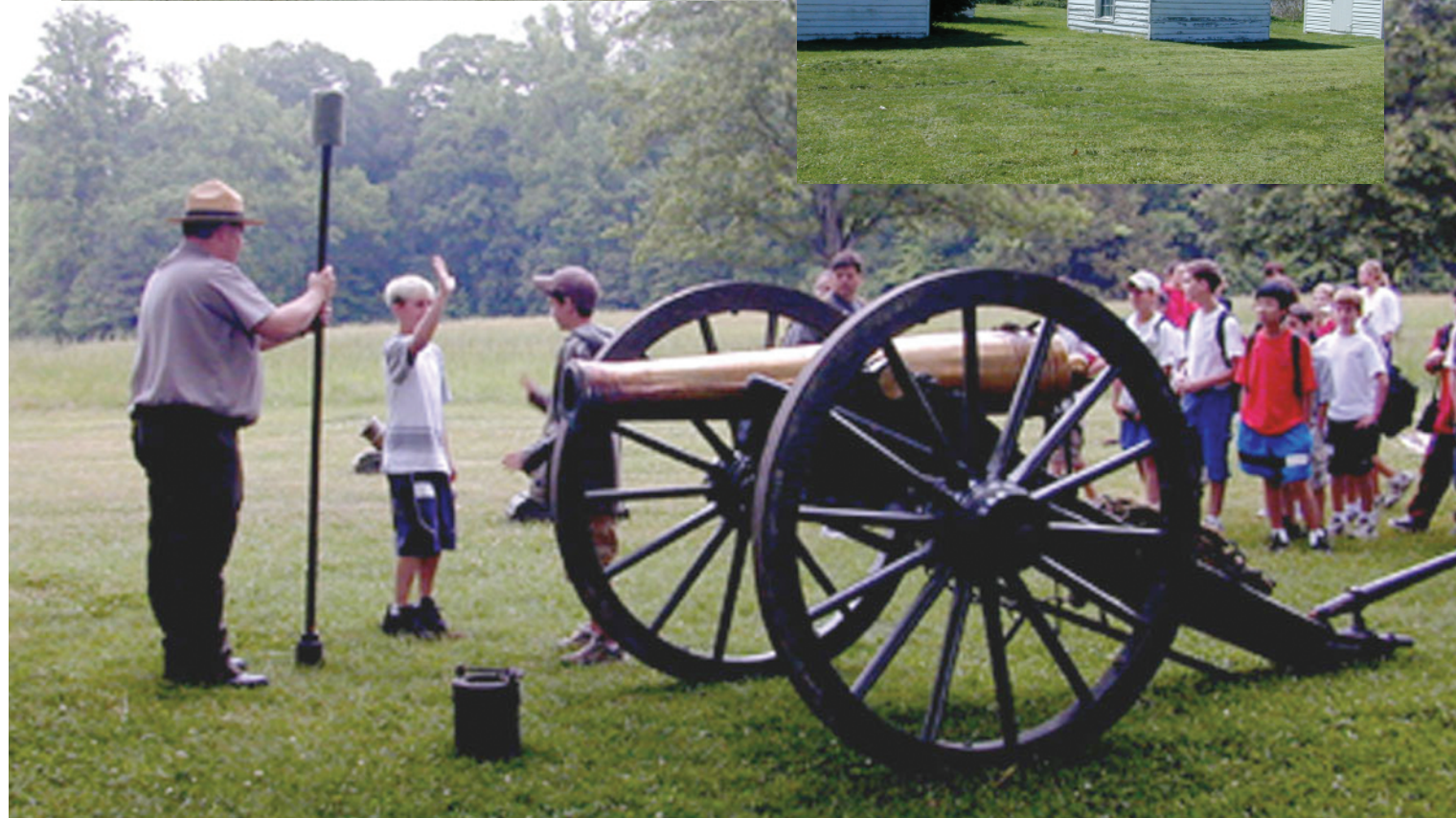


Petersburg National Battlefield

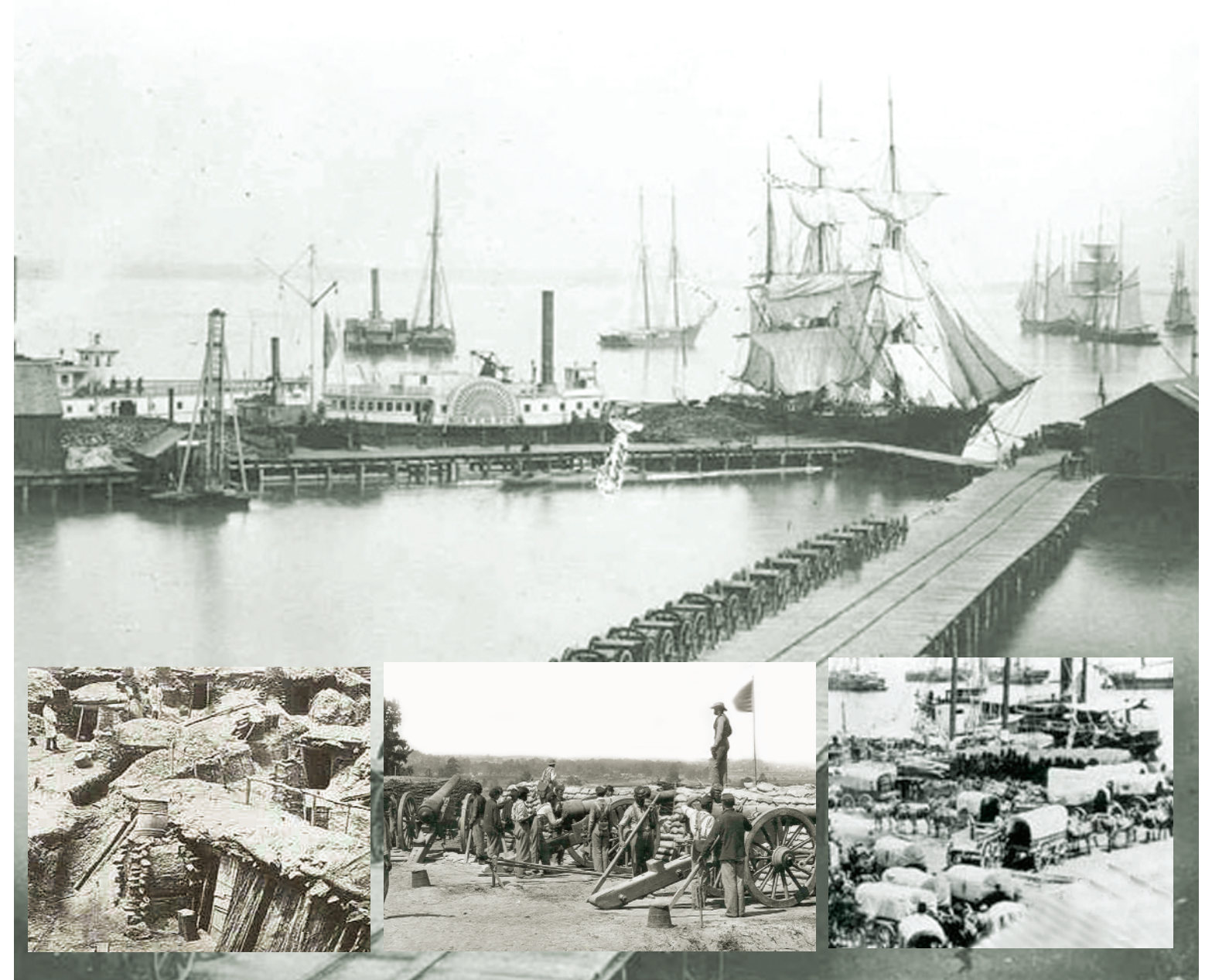
Final General Management Plan

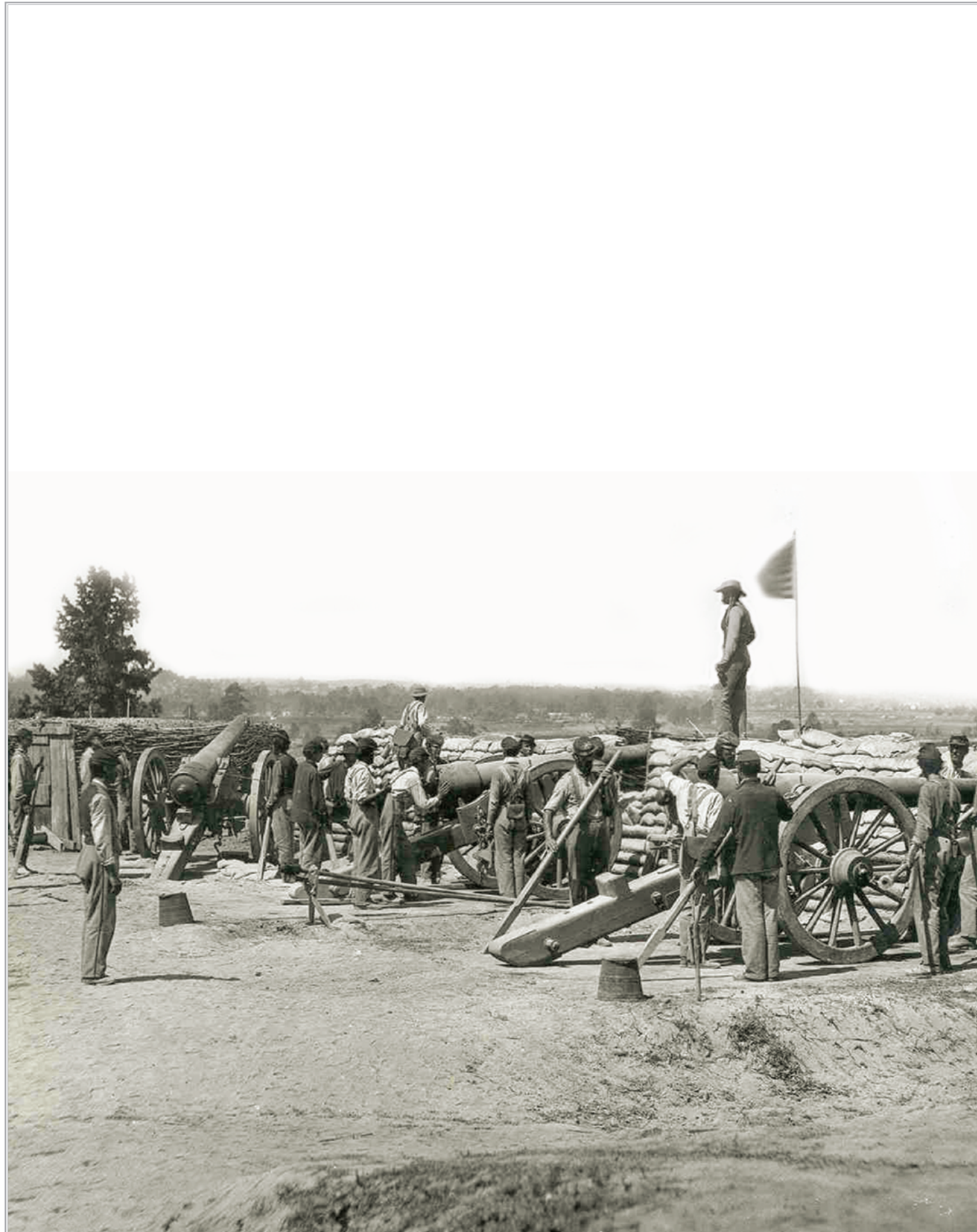
Abbreviated Final Environmental Impact Statement

December, 2004



Petersburg National Battlefield Final General Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement December, 2004





As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

**FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/
ABBREVIATED FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Petersburg National Battlefield
Petersburg, Virginia
2004
Abstract**

This Final General Management Plan/Abbreviated Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final GMP/AEIS) presents an exciting vision for the future of Petersburg National Battlefield. This document also describes the environment that will be affected, and the environmental consequences of implementing each of the alternatives. Alternative A continues the current management direction of the park and constitutes the no-action alternative. Alternative B directs the park's priorities towards the preservation of nationally significant battlefield resources both inside and outside the park. Under this alternative, the boundary would expand by 7,238 acres and maximize partnerships with the communities and other Civil War organizations to protect remaining nationally significant battlefields that have a high degree of integrity. Visitors would continue to use the existing visitor center for orientation and interpretive activities. The visitor contact station at Five Forks Battlefield is removed and relocated. Themes would be expanded to tell the broader stories of the Petersburg Campaign. Alternative C creates dynamic interpretation with resources geared towards interactive and animated programs using modern technology where appropriate, the latest interpretive tools and an upgraded interpretive center. There is a limited boundary expansion of 2,030 acres for protecting existing resources. Visitors can begin their experience at any of the five units with new themes, and expanded programs and facilities developed at Grant's Headquarters at City Point, the Home Front in Old Town Petersburg, Poplar Grove National Cemetery and Five Forks Battlefield. Partnerships that protect nationally significant battlefields outside the park's boundary are emphasized. Under Alternative D (the preferred alternative), the cultural landscape is the mechanism by which the Civil War stories are told. A boundary expansion of 7,238 acres would preserve nationally significant battlefields, protect existing park resources and create opportunities for visitors to access these significant Civil War landscapes and resources. Selected earthworks, viewsheds and landscapes would be rehabilitated to reflect their 1864/1865 appearance. Similar to Alternative C, visitors can begin their experience at any of the five units with new themes, and expanded programs and facilities developed at Grant's Headquarters at City Point, the Home Front in Old Town Petersburg, Poplar Grove National Cemetery and Five Forks Battlefield.

The Draft GMP/EIS was on public review from June 3 to August 6, 2004. All substantive comments received have been responded to in this document. The final plan has been revised to indicate a preferred alternative and provide clarification or correct errors and omission in the document text in response to public comment. The release of the Final GMP/AEIS will be followed by a 30-day no-action period. If no substantive comments are received during that period, a Record of Decision will be prepared to document the selected alternative and set forth any stipulations for implementation of the GMP.

For further information regarding this document, please contact the Superintendent, Petersburg National Battlefield, 1539 Hickory Hill Road, Petersburg, Virginia, 23803 or call (804) 732-3571 extension 105 or visit the park through the web site at www.nps.gov/pete.

FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/ ABBREVIATED FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

FOREWORD

The Final Environmental Impact Statement for Petersburg National Battlefield is printed in an abbreviated format. It must be integrated with the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement issued in June 2004 to be considered a complete document reflecting four alternatives and all significant environmental impacts. **The two documents together compose the complete Final Environmental Impact Statement.**

The abbreviated format has been used for the Final Environmental Impact Statement because the changes to the draft document are minor and confined primarily to factual corrections, which do not modify the analysis. Use of this format is in compliance with the 1978 implementing regulations (40 CFR 1503.4[c]) for the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

An Abbreviated Final EIS contains substantive comments raised by the public or agencies during the comment review period, responses to those comments and an errata section with specific modifications and corrections to the EIS. No rewriting or reprinting of the Draft EIS is necessary. Additional copies of the draft document are also available upon request through Petersburg National Battlefield.

Many people, representing the views of individuals and organizations, suggested refinements to ideas presented in the draft plan, or sought clarification on certain points. Federal guidelines specify that we give responses to comments that are “substantive”. Comments are considered substantive when they:

- Reasonably question the accuracy of information
- Reasonably question the adequacy of analysis
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those presented
- Cause changes or revisions to the proposal

Substantive comments raise, debate or questions a point of fact or policy. Comments in favor of or against one alternative (or component of an alternative), outside the scope of the plan, stating opinion, or that agree or disagree with with NPS policy, are not considered substantive; however, all letters, e-mails and other written correspondence are read and considered. Substantive comments for this plan were addressed with written comments, and where appropriate, by revisions to the text of the draft plan. Text that is to be removed from the draft plan appears as a strikeout, while text that is to be added appears as underlined. Additional non-revised text from the draft plan is provided for context, making the changes more understandable to the reader while reducing the need to refer directly to the draft plan.

FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/ ABBREVIATED FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

SUMMARY

Petersburg National Battlefield does not currently have a General Management Plan. The park's existing Master Plan (1965) was primarily a facilities development plan. The current Master Plan provides no long-range guidance on such issues as related lands outside the park, the management of new park areas, or revisions to operations and programming activities. All of its major recommendations have been completed. In the intervening 38 years, Petersburg NB transferred park land to the city of Petersburg, added two new units, undertook minor boundary adjustments, and identified battlefield lands critical to the park's mission that lie outside its boundaries. At the same time, the park has experienced threats to physical resources and to the visitor experience from incompatible residential, commercial and industrial development along park borders. Finally, over the past quarter century, modern scholarship and changing public values have revealed limitations in the current visitor experience and the need for new interpretive themes.

The Final General Management Plan (GMP) presents and analyzes four alternatives for preserving resources, enhancing interpretation, providing visitor services and working with partners. It responds to the park's mission and the challenges facing the park and adjacent communities today. The Abbreviated Final Environmental Impact Statement (AEIS) has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, which requires the evaluation of potential impacts resulting from federal actions. It includes a description of the environment affected by the proposed activities and the environmental consequences of implementing any of the alternatives.

Alternative A, the no action alternative, identifies the current management direction and provides a baseline with which to compare the other alternatives, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. It retains the management guidance and direction of the 1965 Master Plan, including its identification of significant resources, its boundaries as modified by legislation, and its policies for battlefields and historic properties. The visitor experience begins with an overview of the events at the Eastern Front and continues with a tour of the NPS sites: major fortifications, portions of four battlefields and the Appomattox Manor. This alternative focuses on the existing park resources and relies entirely on NPS to conserve resources, interpret the story and develop and manage the facilities. Partnerships continue to be developed with individuals, organizations or agencies to conserve Civil War resources outside the park.

Under Alternative B, the park places the highest value for staffing and financial resources on battlefield preservation both inside and outside current park boundaries. A boundary expansion of 7,238 acres is proposed. The majority of the park's activities are directed towards protecting battlefield lands through easements, partnership efforts, landowner outreach and education efforts and direct purchase. The historical and contextual importance of Petersburg, the surrounding

battlefield lands, and the need to protect the "blood-soaked ground" for future generations is emphasized in expanded interpretive themes. Visitor interpretation and services currently underway remain as is, with an added layer regarding the importance of the park's preservation efforts and strategies. Educational outreach targets both students and adults for innovative learning. Visitors continue to use the Eastern Front visitor center as the main point of entry and orientation. Since the highest concentration of important battlefields is located here, visitor contact and resources can be maximized. Appomattox Manor provides limited visitor services. The visitor contact station at Five Forks Battlefield is removed and relocated. Partnerships that promote battlefield preservation receive the most consideration in terms of outreach and staff efforts. Technical assistance to surrounding localities and local landowners are an integral part of the park's advocacy role in achieving resource protection.

Alternative C focuses the park's priorities on creating dynamic interpretation with resources geared towards interactive and animated programs using modern technology where appropriate, the latest interpretive tools, and staff. There is a limited boundary expansion of 2,030 acres for protecting existing resources and providing better access for interpretation. A more complete Civil War understanding is emphasized—causes of, experience during, and reconciliation after the war including relevance of the war to people today. The existing visitor center is upgraded to provide for more interpretive media and exhibits. Visitors begin and are oriented to the Petersburg Campaign at any of the five park units. At each unit, a full and comprehensive interpretive program is available, with each unit's story explained within the Campaign. New programs and expanded facilities are developed at Grant's Headquarters at City Point, the Home Front in Old Town Petersburg, Poplar Grove National Cemetery and Five Forks Battlefield. Partnerships with Civil War organizations and sites are the mechanism by which nationally significant battlefields outside the park's boundary are preserved. Park staff provides technical assistance and increases its advocacy role in the community. Partnerships with scholars, historians and educational institutions are also pursued.

Alternative D, the preferred alternative, is the plan recommended by the National Park Service and is the environmentally preferred alternative. In this alternative, the cultural landscape is the mechanism by which the Civil War stories are told. A boundary expansion of 7,238 acres preserves nationally significant battlefields, protects existing park resources and creates opportunities for visitors to access these significant Civil War landscapes and resources. The interpretive program is dynamic and interactive, conveying a more comprehensive Civil War story by making full use of battlefield resources. The visitor experience is much more compelling, as they are immersed in the landscape upon which battles were fought. Efforts by which NPS and others are protecting battlefields and other Civil War-related resources are emphasized. Visitors can begin and be fully oriented at any of the five park units. At each unit, a full and comprehensive interpretive program is available, with each unit's story explained within the campaign. New programs and expanded facilities are developed at Grant's Headquarters at City Point, the Home Front in Old Town Petersburg, Poplar Grove National Cemetery and Five Forks Battlefield. Partnerships with localities and organizations that promote battlefield preservation and further Civil War education and interpretation are pursued.

FINAL GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/ ABBREVIATED FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TABLE of CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Foreword	ii
Summary	iii
Table of Contents	v
CHAPTER ONE: PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION	1
Virginia's Vanishing Battlefields	3
Background and History of the Park	5
Description of the Park	12
Purpose, Significance and Mission of Petersburg NB	14
Decision Points	16
Analysis of Boundary Adjustment Criteria	21
Park Interpretive Themes	37
Relationship to Other Plans and Projects	41
CHAPTER TWO: MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES	43
Overview	44
Preservation Treatments and Their Relation to the Alternatives	45
Management Zones	46
Alternative D (The Preferred Alternative): The Landscapes Tell the Stories	49
CHAPTER THREE: CORRECTIONS AND REVISIONS TO THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	67
CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION UPDATE	71
History of Community Participation	72
Agency Consultation	75
List of Preparers	77
List of Recipients	78
APPENDICES	79
Appendix A: Comments and Responses on the Draft GMP/EIS	80
Appendix B - Enabling Legislation	169
Appendix C - Cost Estimates for Action Alternatives	173